A LETTER TO A NOBLE LORD.

Price Six-pence.

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A

LETTER

TO A

NOBLE LORD,

To whom alone it Belongs.

Occaſioned by a Repreſentation at the THEATRE ROYAL in *Drury-Lane*, of a FARCE, called *Miſs* LUCY *in Town*.

Succeſſit vetus his Comœdia, non ſine multa Laude, ſed in vitium libertas excidit, et vim Dignam lege regi.

HOR. *de Arte Poet.*

LONDON:

Printed for T. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-noſter-Row*.

MDCCXLII.

520

LETTER

TO A

NOBLE LORD,

To whom alone it Belongs.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Occasioned by the Dedication of the
TEMPLE OF DEPRAVITY to Duty-Less,
of a Farce, called Affluence in
Term.

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LONDON:
Printed for T. Cooper, at the Globe in
Pater-noster-Row.
MDCCXLII.

A LETTER TO A NOBLE LORD, &c.

My Lord,

I Am induced to the Liberty of this Addreſs, on having lately been at the Repreſentation of a Farce, called *Miſs* Lucy *in Town*, ſuppoſed to be wrote by Mr. *Fielding*. As to the Wit or Humour of the Piece, I am entirely ſilent, but congratulate the Poet on his happy Genius; which tho' the Legiſlature ſeverely check'd on its daring to ſucceed in a Repreſentation on the Principle of Liberty, *Paſquin*;

yet it now, like a *Phœnix*, rises out of its own Ashes, and convinces the World, that it is not confined to the Lewdness of Liberty, but can equally shine and be approved in the Chastenes of Gallantry.

Pasquin, your G—— knows, painted Liberty in a favourable Light, and Corruption in a most contemptible and vicious one. It had some infamous Inuendo's of a *Strong Box* lost in the Carriage, I think drop'd in the Depths of the Sea. The two first alarmed the late *Ministry*; (of the Dead, my Lord, I speak no Ill, tho' it might not offend your G—— as your sweet Complaisance can draw with, or conveniently withdraw from any *Ministry*) and the last called for Vengeance from an *All-burning Priesthood*. —— Perhaps your Lordship may not comprehend the Licentiousness of the Poet's Wit as to the *Strong Box*: It was indeed mysterious, very mysterious, and for that Reason gave Offence to the Craftsmen of Mysteries.

This complicated Cry against the Piece, wisely induced the last Parliament to pass an Act by way of Amendment to the 12th of Queen *Anne*, which subjected *all Play-*

ers

ers for Gain, unleſs duly authorized, to a pecuniary Puniſhment, and on Failure of Payment, to be ſent to the Houſe of Correction as common Vagabonds. The Act went further; and *prohibited the Repreſentation of any new Interlude, Tragedy, Comedy, or Farce, unleſs a Copy was ſent fourteen Days, at leaſt, before the acting, to the Lord Chamberlain for the Time being*; and a negative Power was veſted in him *to prohibit the Repreſentation*; and the acting it againſt his Prohibition, *ſubjected the Actor to the like Forfeiture and Puniſhment as above.* This Act, my Lord, was approved by Courtiers and Placemen, and all the ſober Part of the Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*. The firſt hug'd themſelves in Security, that their wildeſt and moſt knaviſh Schemes would be ſecured from the Knowledge of the *Many*; and the laſt concluded they might ſafely permit their Wives and Daughters to go *ad libitum* and indiſcriminately to Comedy or Tragedy, without any Danger of having their Minds debauched within the Theatre, or their Blood fermented to unchaſte Deſires, in conſequence of any Performances on the Stage. The laſt were more peculiarly and temporally happy, as the Grand-

ſon of that *pious* and *moſt religious* King *Charles* II. was to have the immediate Direction; I think, my Lord, it was the Wiſdom of the Clergy of his Reign to fix ſuch *apt* and *proper Epithets* to his Name, ſo exactly conſonant to his Mind and Actions.

Your Character, in public and private Life, has ſuch an exact Conformity to his, that except in his Wit, his Religion, and his Power, I defy the niceſt Diſtinguiſher to point out the Difference. His *Chaſtity*, his *Faith to his Promiſes*, his *Toil in ſome Buſineſſes*, (I preſume the Duke of *Buckingham*, who drew his Character, meant in his *Chamberings, and Fox-chaces*) ſhine remarkably in your G——. But above all, his *Love of his Country*, and *general Benevolence*, is your diſtinguiſhing Character. How often, my Lord, have applauding Theatres ſeen and admired your nurſing Vigilance over that ſacred Perſon, on whom not only the Happineſs of three Nations depends, but the Parade of numerous Fleets, and the very Being of Armies, Armies of *Danes*, Armies of *Heſſians*, *Pruſſians*, *Poles*, *Croatians*; in ſhort, Armies of more Nations than

ever

over *Cæſar* triumph'd over. Theſe Qualities render you the Admiration and Eſteem of all that ſee you, and, no doubt, determined the Legiſlature to veſt in you this Tribunitial Power over Players and Poets. Happy for this Kingdom if your Succeſſors are equally qualified!

Since this Act took place, many Tragedies, ſome Songs, and ſome Prologues and Epilogues have been refuſed. Poets will talk of Liberty and Property, tho' perhaps they have neither: That ſacred Love of arbitrary Power in *Kings*; that Rapaciouſneſs ſo frequent in *Miniſters*; and a Vicioufneſs not unuſual in *Courts*, and many ſuch Scenes have been attempted to be exhibited to public View, ſince your Dramatic Adminiſtration;—you well knew the Danger of them, and out of Love to the Public, wiſely denied them your Licence, when lo! the Town has been teaz'd and peſter'd with Subſcriptions, and the Poets, inſtead of running a probable Riſque of being damned on the Stage, have been ſaved and admired in the Cloſet. So retrograde and perverſe is human Nature, that I verily believe

believe if the *Parſons* would join in defaming our *Religion*, we ſhould have *more Religion* amongſt us.

You, my Lord, have wiſely judged, That the Remembrance of *Liberty* frequently dinn'd in the People's Ears might make them giddy, and dream of ſtrange Things, as if it was in imminent Danger; and *Corruption* is ſo eſſential to this flouriſhing Nation, that ſhould it fall in Diſreputo, *our Buroughs* might be reconciled to common Senſe, and common Honeſty, two Principles ſo very malignant, as might be fatal to all Miniſters preſent and to come, with ſome regard to one that is now paſt.

Miniſterarchy is the very Soul of our preſent Conſtitution, equal almoſt to Monarchy, and any Reproach to the one is as unreaſonable, and of as wicked a Tendency as to the other. It is true, *Francis the Firſt* permitted the Dramatic Writers of his Time to ridicule himſelf, his Miniſters, and Nobles; but Monarchs and Miniſters now-a-days are other kind of People, and not on a Footing with *Francis the Firſt*, and his Court.

You

You have a much greater Rule in Favour of your Conduct, the old *Romans*, who are reproached for permitting their Poets to ridicule and ſatirize their *Gods*; but if they took the ſame Liberty with the *Magiſtrate*, they were puniſhed with Death.

Such Subjects belong chiefly to Tragedy, and few Entertainments of that kind, ſince the Commencement of the Act, have appeared on the Stage. Comedy has met with a better Treatment; what tho' they have been void of Wit, almoſt void of common Senſe or Diction, it could not hurt a *Miniſtry* of the ſame Standard; (I mean the laſt, Heaven forbid I ſhould inſinuate any Thing of that Nature of the preſent.) Scenes of *Cuckoldom* made the jolly Circle laugh; it made the Thing familiar, and taught the Ignorant how to manage Intrigues of that Nature. The firſt improved the Tameneſs of Husbands, and the laſt was mending the Underſtanding of the Gallant. Beſides, the Sacredneſs of the Marriage-Contract is ſuch a vulgar Error, that the Eyes of the People want to be opened.—An undutiful Son, who is juſtly angry with his Father for keeping him ſo long out of an

Eſtate,

Estate, is *surely* a Character to be applauded.—And how would many *noble Families* be lineally descended down, if the Stage did not teach *Ladies*, that the *Footman* can amply make up the Deficiency of *my Lord*.

It is true, the first *four Acts* are frequently filled with Characters of this Stamp; and after the Poet has render'd them as amiable as he can, a few Stanza's at the End of the *fifth*, tagg'd with Rhime, tells us, that *Virtue and all that*, as *Boys* says, is the most reasonable Pursuit. It is just the same as if *Cloa*, your Brother D—'s Cook, was to give you a *Secretary's* Dinner on a Birth-day, filled with all the Delicacies of Gluttony and Luxury; such as *Essence of Partridge*, *Whitings Livers*, *Wildducks Tongues*, *&c.* and as soon as you had cramm'd yourself up to a *padding Height*, (a Term well known to the *Mammons* of the Age) and a profound eating Stupidity, *Monsieur the Cook* was to enter and preach you a Sermon on Temperance and Sobriety.

As to Dances, I think your Province of Prohibition does not extend; so the Public

Public can't owe their Gratitude to you for ſeveral. (I appeal to thoſe who have been on the Coaſt of *Malabar*, and the Banks of the *Ganges*) whether we have not had ſome that have exceeded in Poſtures, Actions, or any thing of that kind ſo common amongſt the polite *Indians* of *Indoſtan*.

The laſt Piece which has had your Permiſſion, I dare ſay your particular Approbation, is but a *Farce*, and which I mentioned to your G—— as the Occaſion of this Letter.—I was at the *Playhouſe* in the midſt of a very polite Audience, Part of it the *Royal Family*, when this *Farce* was repreſented, and could not but obſerve the tender and wiſe Care you take of the *Fair Sex*, the *Delight* of your *juvenile Days*, and I preſume the *impotent Hankering* of a *Maturn Age*.—It is true the Ladies of the preſent Age are in general more knowing in the *Miſteries of Nature*, than thoſe of ancient Times; not a Family in the Liberty of *Weſtminſter* but can juſtify the Aſſertion. However, as the Prejudices of Education, and the Severity of ſome Parents who preſume to be decent, may poſ-

ſibly have hinder'd a few from having launched into the nightly Miſteries of *Covent Garden*, that they might no longer be ignorant in ſuch eſſential Secrets, in which all venal Love is ſhewn in its pureſt Light, *this Farce* is preſented to the Public. The Scene, leſt it ſhould not have its due Attention, is continued to the End. It is a *Brothel*, the Plan taken exactly from a Lady's Houſe of very notorious Fame in that Part of the Town, called *Mother Heywood*, and the chief of the *Dramatis Perſonæ*, is one Mrs. *Laycock*. (My Lord, if I miſtake, you can ſet me right, as the Copy muſt be amongſt the *Archives* of your *Office*.)

In the firſt Scene, the Immorality of the Gentlemen, in the Payment of their *Ladies*, is very juſtly expoſed, which occaſions the unhappy Lady to be reduced to letting Lodgings. In the midſt of this Scene, in conſequence of the Ticket at the Door, of *Lodgings to be lett*,—enter Mr. *Thomas*, his *Wife*, and *Company*. The Innocence of the Wife, Mrs. *Laycock*, like a knowing Woman, lays her Schemes to make the beſt Advantage of, and luckily

in ſteps my Lord *Bawble*, who not being provided with the Price demanded, is obliged to go home, to make his Wife refund what, without Precedent, *conſidering his Quality*, he had given her to pay a Tradeſman's Bill. In this Scene, you have unhappily not prohibited a few Reflections, which may be of dangerous Conſequence to your Lordſhip's Country; but of that I'll ſpeak at large preſently. During his Abſence, comes very ſnug in a Chair, Mr. *Zorobabel*, who is one of the good Woman's beſt Cuſtomers, ſhe ſeems overjoyed, tells him of the Prize that had then fallen into her Hands: She talks much in the Stile of Mr. *Cock* the Auctioneer, her Neighbour. *Such a Piece! Such an Angel!* but unluckily tells him Lord *Bawble* was to have the Preference: A Quarrel enſues, to inſinuate that his *Tribe* pay their Women better than ſuch *Chriſtians*, your Lordſhip, or myſelf. You knew the Falſhood, and therefore did not caſtrate the Licentiouſneſs of the Poet's Humour. Like common Friends, the Quarrel only increas'd their Intimacy, and they lay their Heads together, and the Reſult is, Lord *Bawble* is to be fobb'd off with a *ſtale Woman* of Quality, which, by

the way, is to ſhew the Audience, that the beſt Company were in Mrs. *Laycock*'s Liſt, and I preſume frequently viſited her. A Noiſe enſuing in the Houſe, the *Jew* is huddled off to ſave his *Reputation*, and enter an *Italian* Singer, and an *Engliſh*; we'll ſuppoſe them *Montecelli* and Mr. *Lowe*.—The Scene now begins to open, and enter Mr. *Zorobabel*, Mrs. *Laycock*, and the *Heroine* of the Piece: He admires her Beauty, and talks of all the little Preludes to the laſt Scene of Love, as *ſoft Hands*, *white Neck*, *ſweet Lips*; theſe Provocatives, at laſt, make him take a Sample of her, and he fairly *kiſſes her*, and feels her *Bubbies*; I ſpeak out, leſt the Wits ſhould think unhappily, and not pay a proper Regard to your Lordſhip's *great Delicacy* diſplayed throughout this whole Farce. At laſt the Bargain is made, and *Zorobabel* is pack'd off to fetch her ſome Bawbles. The two *Singers* then addreſs the Lady, and having done their utmoſt to gain her, are diſappointed, and the *Italian* flies the Stage, on an Incident which deſerves ſome Notice hereafter, and Mr. *Ballad* retires to cool his Paſſion with Mrs. *Tawdry*. My Lord *Bawble* returns with the *Ready*, and he and the neceſſary Mrs. *Laycock* talk

aſide;

aside; she tells him she can make nothing of her *yet, she is young; have Patience, and she'll do it*; that she is *fresh and raw, and all that*; and, at last, my Lord carries her off; For what?—Only to equip her like a Woman of Quality, that's all. To shorten the Matter, the Husband returns, and the Father; and, in the midst of their Anxiety for the Loss of her, (in which Mr. *Thomas* shews a great deal of old-fashion'd Honour about his Wife) in comes Mr. *Zorobabel* with his Bawbles, and being baulked of his Piece, discovers Mrs. *Laycock*'s Professions and Promises to him, which the Father and Husband, not knowing the World, seem to detest, and re-enters Madam the Wife.—She talks of *Joys and Raptures, &c.* and after a few Airs, Lord *Bawble* comes in, and assuring *Tom* he had nothing but *Kisses*, a Reconciliation ensues, and they immediately determine Bag and Baggage for the Country, and the Scene closes, as usual, with a few poetical moral Reflections, and a Song.

Whilst the Farce was performing, I over-heard a Gentleman behind me cry out, by G—, it is quite natural! Damn it, I fancy myself at *Mother Heywood*'s!

S'Blood

S'Blood, the B--ch ſerv'd me once juſt as ſhe does Lord *Bawble*, and gave me a damned P--x. A ſober Perſon that ſat by, taking a Pinch of Snuff, ſaid, Faith *Fleetwood* had better have hired *Mother Heywood*, and her Company, perſonally to have appeared. A third, knowing your G——'s Modeſty, ſaid, To be ſure my L——d C——n would not have ſuffer'd it. Why not? By G——, ſays the firſt Spark, I know of no Objection, unleſs perhaps *Heywood* would put on more ſqueamiſh Airs, and affect more Modeſty than *Croſs*'s Wife.

I muſt now trouble you with my Sentiments on the whole Performance, and declare how much I think the Public obliged to your G—— for permitting it.

The firſt Perſon of whom you have ſhewn your tender Care, is that good Creature, *Heywood*, as it muſt ſhame her Gentlemen-Cuſtomers into juſter Payments; for the Height of Immorality is Non-payment of the *Ladies*. A Rogue of a Tradeſman gets *Cent per Cent* by his Goods and Wares; but that good *Painstaking Woman*, whoſe Doors are open moſt chari-

charitably at all Hours of the Night for the Good of the Public; ſhe, I ſay, gets nothing by her *Commodities*, unleſs her Cuſtomers bring ready Money, but opprobrious Terms, and broken Windows. The *Jews* muſt own themſelves obliged, as for the future, no doubt, in an Age when moſt Women are mere Brokers in Love, what Lady would not prefer a rich paying *Levite*, to a well-dreſs'd promiſing *Chriſtian* Lord?

Next, the Ladies, who yet peep thro' their Fans at a double *Entendre*, and have not ſurvived the Prejudices of Education, can never expreſs their Gratitude ſufficiently, as without this Performance, how difcult would it be for them to gratify their Curioſity in ſo nice a Point as a *Bawdy-Houſe*.——They muſt have fee'd Chairmen; they muſt have deceiv'd *Parents*, and ſent their *Footmen* out of the way; and a thouſand other Shifts. — But now, by your Goodneſs, all Obſtacles are removed, and if you continue your Indulgence, a *Play-houſe* and a *Bawdy-houſe* will be ſynonimous Words. Could you but introduce a *Church-Scene*, Lord! how much Trouble would you ſave the Ladies in point of

Days

Days and Hours. Besides, a Woman that has been at *Lucy in Town*, I think may have a general Passport to *Mother Heywood*'s, or any House of equal Reputation. The *Upper Gallery* must clap for Joy, whenever you appear at the Theatre; for now they know that the Balance of Honour is *behind the Coach*, and, no doubt, will treat those *within* with an adequate Observance. The Communication of such Truths in so familiar and pleasing a Manner, must undoubtedly enlighten their Understanding.

One Thing I am in some Pain for, on your G—'s Account; that is, I wish you do not pull a *rotten* House about your Ears; I mean, my Lord, *the Church*: For you should have regarded yourself so far, as to have struck out the Scene in which Mrs. *Laycock* insinuates, that Mr. *Whitfield* had drawn poor *Jenny Ranter* astray, and that she was turned *Methodist*. As *Religion* seems at present chiefly in Vogue amongst that Sect, surely they must be *the Church*; especially, as their Pastors are *Episcopally* ordain'd. Besides, I challenge the Poet, on behalf of the Church, to shew me a single Instance of such an

Apostacy

Apoſtacy brought about by any Deacon, Prieſt, Doctor, Biſhop, or Archbiſhop in his Majeſty's three Kingdoms. I am in ſome Pain likewiſe for your G—— on another Account: When *Signior Cantilero* goes off the Stage on my Lord *Bawble*'s Appearance; I think he ſays, '*Le Diable.*' *One of our Directors*; *I would not be ſeen here for the World.* I only ſubmit whether you ſhould not have caſtrated this Scene, as it obliquely ſcandalizes *Mon Signiors*, the *Lords Commiſſioners* of the *Eunuchs*; — as if the Performances and Purſuits of the *Cantilero's* were, in all Reſpects, equal, and the ſame with their Lordſhips. I only hint this to you; — you may make what Uſe you pleaſe of it: A Subordination is neceſſary in all Corporations and Governments, and it may be dangerous to the Adminiſtration of the *Opera*'s, to have ſuch a levelling Principle inculcated. It may foment Rebellions!

How much the preſent Age is indebted to you for thus improving the Morals and Knowledge, and preſerving the Property of ſuch conſiderable Bodies, as the *Bawds*, the *Ladies*, and the *Footmen*, I am at a Loſs

to expreſs; but a ſeverer Age would have erected a brazen Statue to your Memory, equal to any that the Ancients ever erected to that all-ruling Deity *Priapus*.

I cannot conclude this Letter, without obſerving one Thing, which perhaps the *Many* will not believe; that is, to qualify yourſelf for the Truſt which the Legiſlature veſted in you, how accurately muſt you have read *Horace*; I obſerve it in this Particular, in that Part of it where he lays down ſome Rules for Tragedy. He ſays,

Nec pueros coram populo Medæa trucidat.

You, my Lord, have tranſpoſed this to the Comic Scene, and, I dare ſay, tranſlated it thus,

Nor let the Women on the Stage ſhew all.

I would defy Dr. *Bentley* himſelf, if living, to make a juſter Criticiſm or Tranſpoſition from that Author, and I am ſure in this Farce you have ſtrictly kept to this

Tranſ-

Tranſpoſition; for neither Mrs. *Laycock*, Mrs. *Tawdry*, or Miſs *Lucy* are guilty of any ſuch Indecency. Indeed it comes as near the laſt Act as poſſible;—to ſtop there ſhews your Delicacy.

After all, I fear you'll, with your uſual Modeſty, throw the Credit of this Repreſentation on Mr. *C——de*'s Permiſſion; be it ſo, the Public, my Lord, to you alone muſt give the Honour, becauſe the Legiſlature only veſted the Power of Prohibition in the *C———n*, and did not enact a Power of creating a Deputy. Indeed it was neceſſary for you to take ſome Care of one who *behaved ſo well* in your *Family*, and the Crown indulged you in a Deputation, and a Salary of 300 *l.* a Year; but that's a Secret, and I ask your Pardon.

One Thing I am well convinced of, the Crown nor yourſelf cannot depute your *Judgment*, your *Accuracy*, your *Elocution*, and the many other Requiſites to your Office. Your G—— knows Poets are born ſuch; the Clergy are born ſuch; (for I dare ſay Providence does not call or elect them

them afterwards;) and for the future, I shall hope that *L—d C——us* are born such, and that you came into the World with a white Rod, to reform the Stage, and lash a degenerate Age. This is the Expectation of,

MY LORD,

Your G——,

Most Obedient and Devoted

Servant, and Admirer.